

## Message Text

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ACTION SS-30

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FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

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INFO USNMR SHAPE BRUSSELS NIACT IMMEDIATE

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN NIACT IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T MADRID 5933

EXDIS

PERSONAL FOR GENERAL GOODPASTER AND GENERAL EADE FROM  
AMBASSADOR RIVERO

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MARR PFOR SP XF

SUBJECT: USE OF SPANISH BASES IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT

1. I WAS CALLED TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY TODAY AT 4:30 PM FOR URGENT CONSULTATIONS WITH FOREIGN MINISTER LOPEZ RODO ON WHAT WAS CHARACTERIZED AS MATTERS RELATING TO THE JOINT COMMITTEE. DURING INTERVIEW, FOREIGN MINISTER WAS ACCOMPANIED BY GENERAL DIEZ-ALEGRIA, CHIEF OF HIGH GENERAL STAFF, AND MILITARY AND DIPLOMATIC SECRETARIES OF JOINT COMMITTEE (PERINAT AND MATEO MARCOS).

2. FOREIGN MINISTER BEGAN BY READING THE TEXT OF GENERAL FRANCO'S OCTOBER 14 LETTER TO PRESIDENT NIXON ON MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. I EXPRESSED ASSURANCE THAT PRESIDENT NIXON HAD RECEIVED THE GENERALISIMO'S LETTER WELL AND THAT HE SHARED FULLY HIS VIEWS OF THE IMPORTANCE OF A PEACEFUL SOLUTION.

3. FOREIGN MINISTER THEN STATED THAT MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WAS A GREAT PREOCCUPATION TO SPAIN AND REASON FOR THIS  
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INTERVIEW. HE STATED THERE MUST BE STRICT COMPLIANCE WITH THE BASES AGREEMENT. INTERNATIONAL NEWS AGENCIES AS WELL AS ARAB COUNTRIES ARE SEEKING TO DETECT EVEN THE LEAST CONCESSION BY SPAIN IN SUPPORT OF ISRAEL. IF THEY ARE SUCCESS-

FUL, HE ADDED, IT WOULD PUT SPAIN IN A MOST DISAGREEABLE POSITION. HE SAID THAT GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN DETERMINED IN ITS ATTITUDE THAT BASES MAY NOT BE USED IN EVEN THE MOST INSIGNIFICANT WAY IN THE CONFLICT ITSELF OR IN SUPPORT OF MILITARY OPERATIONS. GOVERNMENT OF SPAIN, HE ADDED, "NOT WILLING TO GIVE EVEN ONE MILIMETER" IN USE OF BASES. AS LAST TWO WORLD WARS HAVE SHOWN, SPAIN COMMITTED TO STANDING APART FROM GREAT POWER CONFLICTS AND IT REMAINS FIRM IN THIS ATTITUDE. CALLING ATTENTION TO ARTICLE 34 OF AFC, LOPEZ RODO ASSERTED THAT ANY USE OF THESE BASES IN MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT, WHETHER DIRECT OR INDIRECT, WOULD VIOLATE AGREEMENT. HE REITERATED THIS TWICE.

4. THEREFORE, BECAUSE OF SPAIN'S GRAVE CONCERN, LOPEZ RODO SAID HE WISHED TO CONVENE EXTRAORDINARY AND URGENT MEETING OF JOINT COMMITTEE TO DISCUSS NOTHING BUT MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT AND TO GET FIRM ASSURANCE THAT SPANISH BASES WILL NOT BE USED IN IT. HE PREFERRED THAT MEETING TAKE PLACE TOMORROW (OCTOBER 17) IF POSSIBLE, OR AS SOON AS POSSIBLE THEREAFTER. I TOLD FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I, OF COURSE, COULD NOT GIVE HIM AN ANSWER IMMEDIATELY SINCE I WOULD HAVE TO CONSULT MY GOVERNMENT AND MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR MY MILITARY ADVISOR TO BE PRESENT.

5. LOPEZ RODO THEN DISCUSSED TWO DEVELOPMENTS AFFECTING US BASES THAT GOS WANTS URGENTLY CLARIFIED. FIRST, HE CLAIMED, THERE ARE NOW 22 US TANKER AIRCRAFT AT TORREJON AIR BASE, A NUMBER LARGER THAN NORMAL. HE RECALLED THAT IN APRIL, GOS, THROUGH AIR MINISTRY, HAD ASKED 16TH AIR FORCE TO REMOVE TANKERS FROM TORREJON TO ZARAGOZA BECAUSE OF HAZARD THEY REPRESENT FOR SURROUNDING POPULATED AREAS. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT PLANES WERE OFTEN HEAVILY LOADED AND SLOW IN TAKING OFF AND ENGINE FAILURE COULD CAUSE ONE OF THEM TO CRASH IN POPULATED AREAS, BRINGING "CATASTROPHE" TO MADRID. FOREIGN MINISTER RESTRESSED IMPORTANCE OF THEIR IMMEDIATE TRANSFER TO ZARAGOZA.

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6. TURNING TO SECOND DEVELOPMENT, FOREIGN MINISTER ALLEGED THAT TWO F-4S HAVE BEEN SEEN AT TORREJON THAT ARE PAINTED DIFFERENTLY FROM CUSTOMARY USAF COLORS AND WHICH BEAR NO NUMBERS. HE WAS CONCERNED THAT THESE AIRCRAFT MIGHT BE DESTINED FOR ISRAEL AND WANTED EXPLANATION, FEARING AN OUTCRY IF MATTER WERE TO REACH THE PRESS. IN FOREIGN MINISTER'S WORDS, "WE ARE PLAYING WITH FIRE" AND PUBLIC OPINION IS HEATED UP. MFA HAS RECEIVED MANY TELEGRAMS FROM ARAB COUNTRIES CHARGING THAT AIRCRAFT FOR ISRAEL REFUELING AT TORREJON OR THAT MERCENARY PILOTS FOR THESE AIRCRAFT HAVE BEEN PASSING THROUGH SPAIN. HE CONSIDERED THE ARTICLE IN THE MADRID DAILY YA OF OCTOBER 13 (CLAIMING TRANSIT THROUGH SPAIN OF US MERCENARY PILOTS FOR ISRAEL) WAS "IRRESPONSIBLE",

NEVER HAVING BEEN CONFIRMED. BUT, HE ADDED, THAT PUBLIC OPINION VERY SENSITIVE, SO WE MUST AVOID EVEN APPEARANCES THAT BASES BEING USED IN SUPPORT OF ONE OF THE BELLIGERENTS.

7. I ASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER I WOULD FIND OUT ABOUT HIS ALLEGATIONS REGARDING AIRCRAFT AT TORREJON, REAFFIRMING THAT WE ARE DOING EVERYTHING POSSIBLE TO ENSURE THAT WE DO NOT VIOLATE THE AGREEMENT. I PROMISED TO RELAY HIS CONCERN TO WASHINGTON, BUT I NOTED THAT THE PRESS HAD CARRIED A NUMBER OF FANTASIES WHICH I SAW AS A FORM OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE. TO EMPHASIZE HIS CONCERN, LOPEZ RODO THEN READ FROM A LENGTHY SUMMARY PREPARED BY MFA OF MESSAGES RECEIVED FROM ARAB CAPITALS EXPRESSING ARAB FEARS THAT INCIPIENT US AIR BRIDGE TO ISRAEL WILL BE SUPPORTED IN SOME FASHION FROM BASES IN SPAIN. IN CONCLUDING, HE AGAIN STRESSED THAT ALL EYES ARE NOW ON SPAIN AND THERE IS GRAVE DANGER THAT THOSE WATCHING WILL SEIZE ON SOME SHRED OF EVIDENCE TO INVOLVE SPAIN IN CONFLICT. HE ADDED THAT BY NATURE OF CONFLICT SPAIN AND US, UNDER TERMS OF THEIR AGREEMENT, CANNOT CONSIDER WEST THREATENED AT ALL.

8. IN DEPARTING, I AGAIN ASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER THAT I WOULD APPRISE US GOVERNMENT OF SPANISH POSITION AND THAT I WOULD BEGIN AT ONCE TO PREPARE FOR SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE MEETING AT EARLIEST POSSIBLE DATE, THOUGH EXACT TIMING OF COURSE DEPENDED ON AVAILABILITY OF US MILITARY ADVISOR.

9. WITH REGARD TO SPECIFIC QUESTIONS RAISED BY FOREIGN  
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MINISTER CONCERNING TANKERS AND F-4S AT TORREJON, I PLAN TO SEND HIM LETTER TOMORROW PROVIDING FULL EXPLANATION ALONG FOLLOWING LINES: (A) NUMBER OF TANKERS NOT ABNORMAL. AS MATTER OF LONGSTANDING PRACTICE USAF NORMALLY HAS FROM 18 TO 22 KC-135S AT TORREJON; (B) KC-135 FULLY CAPABLE OF SAFE TAKE OFF EVEN IF ONE ENGINE FAILS, ACCORDING TO PERFORMANCE FIGURES BASED ON ACTUAL FLIGHT TEST DATA; (C) ALL F-4S AT TORREJON BELONG TO USAF. BECAUSE OF TORREJON'S RECENT CHANGEOVER TO F-4C MODELS, IT RECEIVED AIRCRAFT FROM OTHER USAF UNITS WITH DIFFERENT MARKINGS. THOSE MARKINGS NOW BEING CHANGED TO PUT ON IDENTIFYING INSIGNIAS OF TORREJON-BASED UNITS.

10. IT APPEARS THAT OVERRIDING AIM OF GOS IN TODAY'S INTERVIEW AND IN SPECIAL JOINT COMMITTEE IS TO GET AS FIRM AND EXPLICIT ASSURANCES AS POSSIBLE FROM US REGARDING USE OF BASES. I WOULD APPRECIATE ON URGENT BASIS DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTIONS FOR STATEMENT OF ASSURANCE I CAN GIVE LOPEZ RODO.  
RIVERO

SECRET

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